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Palo Alto Jewish Community Center Announces Public Commitments to Racial Justice, Equity and Inclusion

Palo Alto, CA—March 15, 2021— The Oshman Family JCC, a Silicon Valley-based nonprofit community center, has announced a renewed pledge to advance racial equity and justice through [a series of commitments](#) published on its website. Through its community celebrations, family and individual learning programs, fitness, preschool and grade school care and programming offered in three different languages, the OFJCC welcomes thousands of visitors every week.

The new commitments are wide-ranging and include fostering a diverse JCC all the way to the Board level, continuing to make its award-winning preschool, teen and afterschool programs accessible through scholarships and expanding on social action projects beyond its walls.

“The Jewish Community Center was founded as a place to welcome everybody, especially those who are considered different,” notes Zack Bodner, OFJCC CEO. “Jewish tradition has always embraced core values like pursuing justice and being radically inclusive. That ethos continues today in Palo Alto with our commitments to fighting structural inequalities faced by communities of color and other underrepresented groups.”

The commitments include offering educational programs to combat racial injustice and supporting greater income equity with tools such as scholarships. Recently, the OFJCC initiated a series of community conversations with activists like Reverend Anthony A. Johnson, endeavored to raise more funding to make family programs more accessible to those with financial need and continued to institute a culture of giving with over 1,500 households getting involved in local social action efforts at its most recent Mitzvah Day as part of the National Day of Service on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2021.

The statement represents a clear commitment of values from a stalwart Silicon Valley institution, many of whose members and Board of Directors come from local business, health and religious sectors. “The OFJCC is a beacon of this type of leadership in the region, and a place where people from different cultures and industries within Silicon Valley convene to share ideas,” notes Nicole Rubin, chair of the OFJCC Racial Justice Task Force. “We all have important work to do to advance justice and equity.”

The new commitments come at time where the need is great. “This statement is more important now than ever because many of us feel isolated from our community and this is an opportunity for us to communicate that all members of our community are counted and appreciated.” Says Tali Ronen, incoming OFJCC



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Board Chair. “We celebrate our diversity. We celebrate the differences in each other and that’s what strengthens us as a community.”

A commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion must advance within the Jewish community, as well. According to Brandeis University’s Steinhardt Social Research Institute, 11% of Jewish Americans are nonwhite. Monique Schulter, an OFJCC staff member who is of Filipino descent explains, “As a Jew by choice, and a Jew of color, I have a unique ability and perspective. I’ve since become passionate about helping my non-Jewish colleagues to feel included, feel acknowledged and welcome in our tent.”

More Information

Please find the OFJCC Statement on Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion here:
<https://www.paloaltojcc.org/JEDI>.

View "Talkback with Zack" OFJCC CEO Zack Bodner in conversation with Racial Justice Task Force member Madeline Chaleff and Staff JEDI Committee member Monique Schulter here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbYq8LhOK3w>

About the Oshman Family JCC

The Oshman Family Jewish Community Center (OFJCC) is a community-supported nonprofit on the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life which serves the South Peninsula through educational, social, cultural, fitness, sports and other programs. The OFJCC provides a common ground for Jewish institutions, other local groups, organizations and individuals to work, learn and play together for the betterment of the whole community. The OFJCC's registered trademarks are Live Fully® and Architects of the Jewish Future®. For more information, visit paloaltojcc.org or call (650) 223-8700.

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